

Northwest Region 2005-2006 Bycatch Priorities and Implementation Plan Summary

Monitoring

Priorities for FY05:

- Obtain adequate funding for PacFIN to ensure sufficient level of port sampling.
- Expand West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) coverage to open-access vessels making groundfish landings.
- Implement mandatory catch monitoring program for shore-based whiting fishery, possibly with camera or other technological observation systems.
- Explore expanding the vessel monitoring system program to cover commercial open access and fleets that target groundfish.

Priorities for FY06:

- Update Northwest Fisheries Science Center bycatch model with 2001-2005 WCGOP data to improve precision of bycatch rate estimates.
- Explore electronic logbooks as a means of improving fishing location data.
- Work with the states to improve the landings receipt system, possibly moving to electronic fish tickets.

Research

Priorities for FY05:

- Conduct further observer data analysis to refine the program's sampling design and fleet monitoring strategies.

Priorities for FY06:

- To be determined

Management

Priorities for FY05:

- Complete Biological Opinion update on the effects of West Coast groundfish fishery on ESA-listed salmon species.
- Assess effects of West Coast groundfish and halibut fisheries on short-tailed albatross.
- Implement a full-retention program for the shorebased whiting fishery
- Work with the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) in their efforts to develop an individual transferable quota program for the limited entry groundfish trawl fishery
- Develop with the PFMC an FMP amendment to support the PFMC's preferred alternative in the completed Bycatch Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Priorities for FY06:

- Explore capacity reduction programs for open-access fisheries.
- Explore a full-retention and electronic monitoring program for catcher boats in the mothership whiting fishery.

Education/Outreach

Priorities for FY05:

- Develop information on bycatch for Northwest Region website.

- Continue to work with PFMC on development of its communications plan

Priorities for FY06:

- Expand information on bycatch on NWR website.